

Jesus' Methodology for Evangelism: GO!



Thrust statement: Christ's body is to be missionary in purpose and missionary in design.

Scripture reading: Matthew 28:18-20; Genesis 12:1-3

As one reflects upon Jesus' final words to His disciples, one observes that the church of our Lord Jesus exists for the sake of the world, not for itself as an institution. The congregation is intended to be missionary in purpose and missionary in design. The church is to have a missionary approach in its outreach. In other words, the church should be structured so that its members are mobile and active in building up each other and moving out into the world to convert people to Jesus. The church today, as a whole, advances a "come" theology rather than a "go" theology. The "come" attitude generally means that the church just waits for people to drop in. But if the people of God expect to win souls to Christ, then it must reevaluate the current philosophy of "four-walls" mentality. It must return to what Jesus taught—go and tell. The title for this message is "Jesus' Methodology for Evangelism: GO!" Christ's strategy for evangelism is found in **Matthew 28:18-20**.

One might almost say that the present-day church is better equipped for every other task than it is for its primary mission of proclaiming the gospel of Christ. When the church is silent, it is not true to its calling. Do not Christians incur guilt when they do not pass on the Gospel they have been entrusted with? The church of Jesus cannot be a true church when it is silent about the good news of God's way of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. Today, there is a great deal of shyness in speaking about the things of God to a lost and dying world. God's people must work toward breaking down the traditional aloofness that produces a church of silent saints.

CHALLENGE TO ALL BELIEVERS

I would like to present a vigorous challenge to the congregation of Christ at Oakwood Hills to recover the biblical concept of the evangelistic mission. Paul in writing

to the Corinthians reminds them of the their own calling to the ministry:

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:16-21**).^[1]

What is this Scripture saying to you? Are you in Christ? Are you committed to the message of reconciliation? Are you an ambassador of Christ? Are you conscious that God makes His appeal to sinners through His new creation? The church is God's creation. Paul expresses it this way to the Ephesians: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (**Ephesians 2:10**). God is continually working in those who belong to Him. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, cuts away all underbrush when he writes: "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (**Philippians 2:13**).

All Christians are subject to God's Word and are to be committed to His will and to His service. The words of the Chronicler should echo constantly in the minds of God's children: "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (**2 Chronicles 16:9**). Are you committed to Him? Have you consecrated your life to Him? Are you just playing church? Christians are tempted to negligence, selfishness, pride, self-centeredness, and contentiousness. However, individuals and congregations should never be complacent with their present spiritual level and never satisfied with less than what the Lord desires of His people.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD PRAY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Are you praying for the advancement of God's kingdom? Are you one of the ones seeking to work the harvest? Are you praying that God will send forth laborers into His vineyard? Matthew mentions an occasion in which Jesus was reaching out to men and women who were harassed and helpless. As he looked upon these individuals, Matthew informs us that His heart was filled with compassion. Listen to Matthew as he captures the tender compassion of Jesus:

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "**The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.**" ³⁸ Ask

the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” ([Matthew 9:35-38](#)).

Are you one of the workers for Jesus? Have you asked the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field? Having said this, one must not depreciate the importance of the congregation. The congregation of God should be so structured that it encourages mobilization of the people to be a gathered people, a group called out from the world to strengthen, encourage, and comfort one another. But, on the other hand, the congregation should also be taught to scatter and go out into the world to confess Christ. There is a divine rhythm—come and scatter.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OVERTONES OF THE “COME STRATEGY”

Whenever a church adopts just the “come” strategy, then the church dies. It is not an either/or proposition. In other words, the Christian community must be a “come and go,” that is, a “gather and scatter” fellowship. There is a positive and a negative overtone associated with the “come” philosophy. On the negative side, some Christians are always “coming” but never “going.” Another negative of the “come strategy” is when the church opens the door to wait until the people come in, but the members do not go out. Church growth ceases because soul winning is seldom practiced. Christians attend church gatherings regularly, but they are not active in evangelistic outreach. God’s people live and work in the community, but they seem completely unaware of their responsibilities for witnessing to those whom they meet daily in the market place.

The negative “wait” and “let come” is the very opposite of what Jesus taught in [Matthew 28:18-29](#). The “come” mentality, separated from the “go” mentality on the part of the believer has robbed the church of its effective evangelistic strategy in winning souls to Christ. It is true that once an individual is a Christian, he/she should be encouraged to attend the gatherings of the saints. Yet, for the saints, what is essential to any growth is a “come and go” concept in which Christians come to be strengthened by the preaching of the Gospel and teachings of God’s Word and fellowship with other believers in order to “go out” into the world to penetrate the world with the saving message of the Gospel of Christ.

“GO” AND THEN “COME” STRATEGY

Every believer should react toward every sinner with a “go” and then “come” strategy. When sinners are invited to the community of God this way, then the cart follows the horse. But on the other hand, if the church expects the sinner to just drop in without any activity on the part of the believer, then the horse follows the cart. Church work was never intended to be carried out in the church building alone. Today, churches very seldom employ church bells to remind people that it is time to “come to worship,” but in an earlier age, the bells rang out to encourage people “to come.” On the other hand, the New Testament writers exhort the saints to “go” into the community and the world—go to every creature. Christians “come” in order that they might “go.”

This concept of the “go strategy” brings us to the Great Commission that Jesus extended to His disciples. In this well-known Commission, one observes the “go

strategy,” not a “come strategy.” Listen to Matthew as he leaves his readers with Jesus’ final charge to His disciples:

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Gospel should keep Christians “on the go” as the people of God, rather than just sitting and slumping in the pews. The Christian assembly should be like a service station; you come to be filled up on high-octane, only to go out to serve. Christians come together to receive encouragement to equip them to go back out into the world to fulfill their mission of sharing God’s way of salvation. Just as soldiers do not remain continually in the barracks, so Christians do not remain forever in the church building. Just as football players do not remain in a huddle, so Christians do not remain in the church building. Christians should “come together” in order to “go” to the harvest fields to reach non-Christians in their Jerusalems, their Judeas, their Samarias, their Floridas, and their ends of the earth.

WHY THE FAILURE TO EVANGELIZE?

One reason for a lack of evangelism is a failure to understand clearly what the Gospel of God is all about. If you once get an insight into the greatness of what God has accomplished in the sending of His Son, then there is no way you can keep quiet. You will be like Andrew, Peter’s brother. John, in giving us a little insight into the first disciples of Jesus, reports Andrew’s response to Jesus:

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “**You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas**” (which, when translated, is Peter) [John 1:40-47].

As you read about the story of redemption, do you feel a desire to share your faith with your relatives and friends? The emphasis in this message is that it is wrong for believers not to go after individuals to lead them to the Lord Jesus. There is a sense in which it is “go” for the believer and then “come” for the sinner. Do you remember the story of Philip? When he found out that Jesus is the Messiah promised by the prophets, he went to Nathanael and said “come and see.” Christians at Oakwood Hills should “go” and say, “come” and see what is going on at this fellowship of believers. As a whole, people do not just drop in—even though there are exceptions. Many people are just waiting for someone to invite them—waiting for a “come” invitation. The one that Andrew brought to Jesus is the one that spoke on the Day of Pentecost about Christ being the fulfillment of the prophets. Have you ever told anyone, “We have found the Messiah?”

In this same chapter (**John 1**) as stated above, John gives the reaction of another one, whom Jesus called; namely, Philip from the town of Bethsaida. This story is truly amazing, especially with the skepticism of the one called Nathanael. Let's listen in on the conversation:

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, **“Follow me.”** ⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶ **“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”** Nathanael asked. **“Come and see,”** said Philip. ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, **“Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”** ⁴⁸ **“How do you know me?”** Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, **“I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”** ⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, **“Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”** ⁵⁰ Jesus said, **“You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.”** ⁵¹ He then added, **“I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man”** (**John 1:43-51**).

Did you observe that Jesus found Philip and told him to follow Him? Have you found anyone and told him or her to follow Jesus? Are you willing to imitate the Savior of the world? When Philip followed Jesus, Did he stop there? No, he found someone. Are you a Philip? Are you an Andrew? Have you found anyone? Have you told anyone what you know about the One that Moses and the prophets wrote about? This salvation is so great that even the angels of God desired to stoop low and look into. Peter, the one led to the Lord by Andrew, paints a picture of the eagerness of the prophets to know about the time of this salvation, and he also unveils a portrait of the bewilderment of the angels over this salvation. He describes all of this in very concise phraseology:

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things (**1 Peter 1:8-12**).

CHRISTIANS NEED TO RECAPTURE THE AWESOMENESS OF SALVATION

Do you stand in awe of the awesomeness of this salvation by grace through faith?

The salvation that the prophets “searched intently and with the greatest care” is now a reality. Are you sharing Jesus with your loved ones, with your neighbors, with the people that you work with, with the people that you purchase things from, and so on? What was it like among the early Christians? Luke captures the intensity of feelings when he writes:

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved ([Acts 2:42-47](#)).

They were “devoted” to the things of God. Are you dedicated to the cause of Christ? Are you committed to the souls of men and women? Do you praise God for your redemption? Is Christianity an everyday thing with you? Do you devote yourselves daily to the things of God? Or is it just a once a week project? One must never forget the missionary efforts of Jesus to tell people about the good news of the kingdom of God. Matthew puts it this way: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” ([Matthew 4:23](#)). In the first commission, Jesus sent the twelve out to the nation of Israel. Again, Matthew gives us this charge of Jesus to His disciples:

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. ⁹ Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; ¹⁰ take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ “Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town ([10:5-14](#)).

In the first commission, Jesus sends them out to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus says, “as you go.” Did everyone receive the message of salvation? No! But many did. Today, many will not receive the good news of God. But, in spite of this rejection, every believer still has a responsibility of going and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. John also gives some information about the rejection and acceptance of some.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world

did not recognize him.¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (**John 1:10-13**).

Again, one must ask himself/herself, Am I sharing the good news about God's way of salvation in Him and by faith in Him? Only in one's acceptance of Jesus can one experience the new birth. Do you really believe what Jesus told Nicodemus about His coming? Listen to Jesus as He explains the nature of salvation:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son (**John 3:16-18**).

This is the heart of the Gospel—redemption in Jesus. Whenever one looks at the Law of God, one can only bow his head and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Paul drives home this point to the Romans:

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin (**Romans 3:19-20**).

What is the good news of God? Immediately following this rather dismal condition of condemnation, he soars into the heavens with God's answer to man's dilemma:

²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law (**3:21-28**).

How can one be righteous? God's answer: "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (**3:23**). This is what Jesus preached.

Justification and redemption is through Him. This is what Jesus wants His people to proclaim. Peter, at the instigation of the Holy Spirit, went to the house of Cornelius to tell him what to do to be saved. Upon Peter's arrival, he declares the message of salvation:

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹ “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (**Acts 10:34-43**).

CONCLUSION

As stated above, in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he reminds them in a nutshell as to the simplicity of the Gospel and of their responsibilities in proclaiming reconciliation to God through Jesus. This sermon—Jesus' Methodology for Evangelism: GO!—began with a citation from Paul's letter to the Corinthians and ends with this same citation. The following verses address the very heart of the Gospel of God revealed to Abraham almost two thousand years before the Logos became flesh:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:17-21**).

What is the Gospel? Paul says, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.” Yes, that is the good news of God's kingdom—forgiveness of sins in and through Jesus. Christians should never neglect personal witnessing. The Sunday gatherings should be leading families to discuss and act

positively on the matter of one's relationship to Christ—not just going through certain prescribed rituals ordained by the traditions of men. There is nothing wrong with singing, praying, preaching, teaching, giving, and the Lord's Supper, but Christians should be conscious that without godly living all of one's rituals are null and void.

Hopefully, the various questions asked in this message on evangelism will cause every Christian to reflect upon the importance of sharing one's faith. Are you going? Are you telling? Are you inviting? Are you praying? Do you gather in order to scatter? Do you understand the Gospel of God? Do you stand in awe as you reflect upon God's grace? Are you like the angels? Do you intensively yearn for the Anointed One as the prophets did? Are you committed? Are you seeking the kingdom of God? One should search his/her own soul in seeking to answer the above questions. My prayer is that God will assist each of us in the following decision: But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. What is God's answer to evangelism? Jesus answers this question in His final admonition to His disciples:

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

^[1] All Scripture citations are from *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984, unless noted otherwise.